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FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0608
INFO CIS COLLECTIVE
NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0138
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0194
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0156
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0153
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0156
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0187
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 0143
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000289

SIPDIS SIPDIS
DEPT FOR SCA AND DRL
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: UN CONVENTION ON DISABLED PERSONS ADOPTED;
ACTIVIST GIVEN SUSPENDED SENTENCE

REF: 08 TASHKENT 1538; 08 TASHKENT 845; TASHKENT 223

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard Fitzmaurice, Poloff; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (U) On March 2, the state-controlled UzReport.com website reported that new Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations in New York Murad Askarov signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol on February 27. The article noted that the UN Convention "...clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights...and where protection of rights must be reinforced."

¶2. (U) Uzbekistan's adoption of the UN Convention has been in the pipeline for some time and occurred not long after the Uzbek Ministry of Labor signed an agreement to participate in an ACCESS (Accessibility, Civic Consciousness, Employment, and Society Support for Persons with Disabilities) project with several international partners aimed at expanding social integration and employment and educational opportunities for disabled persons. The two-year ACCESS project in Uzbekistan began in August 2008 (ref A).

DISABLED SOCIETY CHAIRMAN GETS SUSPENDED SENTENCE

¶3. (C) Former Chairman of the Disabled Society of Uzbekistan Oybek Isokov, who forcefully advocated for the adoption of the UN Convention with government officials, reported to Emboffs last summer encountering resistance from the Ministries of the Economy and Finance, which were balking at the potential costs of complying with the Convention's provisions (ref B). In January, Isokov was

charged by authorities with receiving an 800 dollar bribe from his staff lawyer, Farid Abdurashidov. Isokov later told Emboff that he was coerced by authorities into signing a confession, after which point he was released from custody pending his trial (ref C). On March 5, a court in Tashkent convicted Isokov of bribery and gave him a two-year suspended sentence and a fine worth 12 million soums (approximately 8,500 dollars), while Abdurashidov was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

COMMENT

¶4. (C) Uzbekistan's adoption of the UN Convention is another indication that assistance to disabled persons is a possible area for human rights cooperation to pursue with the government. At the same time, we are disappointed with the conviction of Isokov, an International Visitor's (IV) program alumnus and highly regarded activist for the disabled (who is also disabled himself), though we are at least glad to see he was not imprisoned. The fact that the Uzbek government adopted the UN Convention shortly before the conviction of Isokov and Abdurashidov lends credence to the view that the two men were not targeted because of their advocacy on behalf of disabled persons, but because they were framed by a third individual who wished to take over the organization (ref C).

NORLAND